BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Wages and Salaries

- **Wages and salaries in British Columbia rose 0.4% (seasonally adjusted) in September.** The increase was double the national average (0.2%). Wages and salaries were flat or dropped in eight of the country's twelve regions. New Brunswick (0.8%), Alberta (0.7%), Ontario (0.4%) and BC were the only provinces where wages and salaries were higher in September than in the previous month.

  On a year-to-date basis, wages and salaries in the province were up 3.7% over the first nine months of 1996. This was slightly below the national average of 4.0%. Yukon (+10.0%) and Alberta (+6.7%) posted the strongest gains in the country. Wages also grew at above-average rates in Saskatchewan and Ontario (both at 4.7%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

Housing

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued its downward spiral in October.** Vancouver's New Housing Price Index (NHPI) was down 3.5% from October 1996, while the NHPI in Victoria was 2.8% lower. New house prices in the province have been falling since mid-1994, and October's decline marked the 42nd straight month that prices have fallen in Victoria, and the 41st month of declining prices in the Vancouver metropolitan area. Nationally, new house prices were up 1.1%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Residential MLS sales in BC increased 2.0% (seasonally adjusted) between September and October.** The volume of MLS sales was up 3.4% nationally, with Manitoba (26.4%) posting the strongest gain.

  Source: Canadian Real Estate Association

Motor Vehicle Sales

- **Motor vehicle sales in the province increased 8.8% in October, relative to the same month last year.** After starting 1997 with very strong growth, sales in the province have been increasing more moderately since last May. October's increase was slightly below the national average (9.1%), which was boosted by very strong growth in Newfoundland and the three prairie provinces. Sales were up 7.1% in Ontario. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Bankruptcies

- **There were 717 consumer and business bankruptcies in British Columbia in September.** This was up 43% from the same month last year, when the number of bankruptcies totalled 502. Consumer bankruptcies rose sharply (54%, to 671), continuing a steady climb that began in the spring of 1995, while business bankruptcies fell (-32%) for the second straight month (-30%). Nationally, the total number of bankruptcies was 16% higher than in September 1996. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **A recent Statistics Canada study identifying factors contributing to business bankruptcies suggests that most bankruptcies occur in small and younger firms.** These firms typically fail because of unanticipated external shocks and internal deficiencies. Almost half of the firms in Canada that go bankrupt do so primarily because of internal weaknesses, with the main reason for failure being inexperienced management. Seventy-one percent of firms fail because of poor financial planning. Marketing inadequacies were another common cause of business failure. *Source: SC, Catalogue 61-525-XPE*

Report **Shacking Up**

Did you know...?
In 1996, 4.2 billion litres of gasoline were purchased in BC for use in motor vehicles. On a per capita basis, that translates into 1,082 litres for every person in the province.

The Year 2000

- **According to a survey conducted this fall, fewer than half of all Canadian firms have taken action to prepare for anticipated computer problems in the year 2000, even though more than 90% of the companies were aware that there is a potential problem.** Sixty-one percent of small firms, and 30% of medium-sized companies had taken no action to address the problem. Among large companies, most (92%) were addressing the problem in some way, but only 48% had formal plans for dealing with it. The survey estimated that fixing the Year 2000 problem could cost more than $12 billion.

  Source: Statistics Canada

First Common-Law Unions

- **Fifty-seven percent of Canadians entering their first union between 1990 and 1995 chose to live common-law rather than to marry.** Women were 75% more likely to enter a first common-law union if their parents had separated or divorced (before they were 15 years old) than if their parents had remained married. Those who already had a child were 50% more likely than women without children to choose a common-law union over marriage. Those who held a paid job were twice as likely to choose a common-law union as those who did not have any paid employment. Age was also an important factor: women aged 15 to 24 were 30% more likely than the next youngest cohort (those aged 25 to 34) to choose a common-law relationship for their first union. Francophones living in Quebec were also more likely than other women to be in first common-law unions. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Overtime Work

- **In November 1995, paid workers in Canada regularly put in 6.8 million hours of overtime each week.** If this overtime had been converted into jobs of 40.5 hours per week, as many as 169,000 additional jobs might have been created in Canada, reducing the unemployment rate from 8.7% to 7.5%. This would have translated into about 16,000 additional jobs in British Columbia, with a commensurate reduction of 0.8 percentage points (to 8.0%) in the province's unemployment rate. However, when the skills, qualifications and location of those doing overtime work were compared to the pool of unemployed workers, the potential for job creation was considerably lower, dropping to 93,000 jobs at the national level. In addition, only 5% of employees who regularly worked overtime said they would be willing to have their hours reduced for less pay. This would further decrease the potential job gains to 10,000, even with no matching of workers based on occupation or location.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 75-001-XPE

- **Between January and September of this year, almost 2 million Canadian employees worked an average of 9.2 overtime hours each week.** More than half (53%) of these workers were not paid or otherwise compensated for any of their overtime. This was even true within the civil service. Twenty percent of men reported doing overtime work, compared to 14% of women. Men also worked more overtime hours (9.9) than women (8.1). Most of the overtimers (62%) were between the ages of 25 and 44.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 75-001-XPE

The Nation

- **Real gross domestic product (GDP) at market prices grew 1.0% (seasonally adjusted) in the third quarter of 1997.** Consumer spending (1.3%) and business investment in plant and equipment (3.6%) continued to drive final domestic demand, which was up 1.5%. Investment by the government sector rose more moderately (1.1%) while government spending on goods and services was only marginally higher (0.2%) than in the second quarter. The balance of trade was lower (but still positive), as exports (2.4%) grew less than imports (4.6%). This release marks the first step in a process of historical revisions currently underway at Statistics Canada. National GDP estimates have been revised back to 1961 and it is expected that historical revisions to provincial GDP estimates will be released some time next year. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

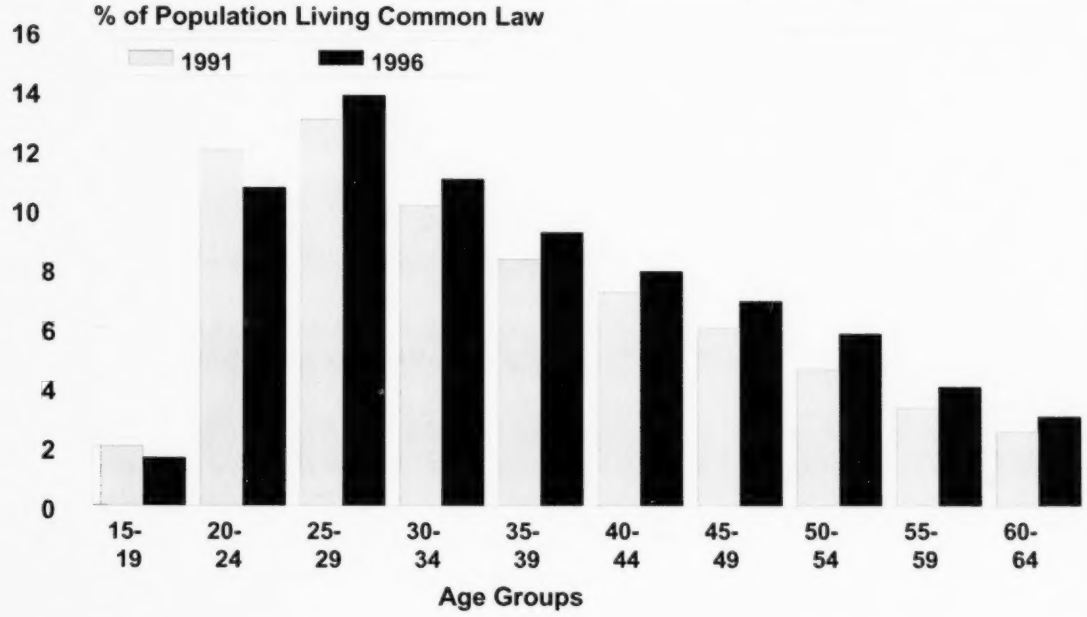
BC STATS

1996 Census Fast Facts

Contact: Anne Kittredge
Tel: (250) 387-0374
Release: Nov. 1997
Issue: 5

Focus on BC Families: *Common-law Partnerships*

Common-law Unions Continue to Increase Except Among the Young



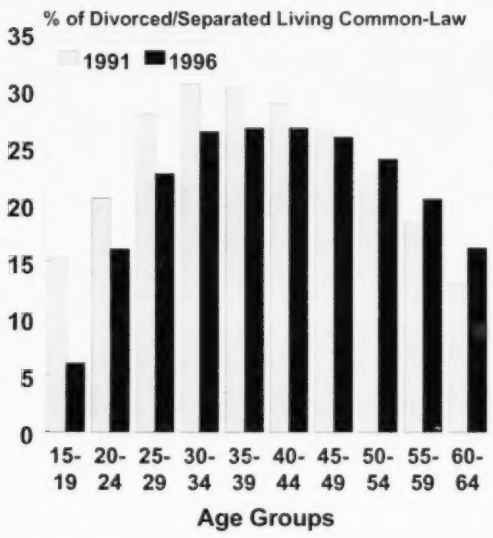
BC STATS

For all age groups, except the 15 to 24 year olds, the proportion of the population living common-law increased between 1991 and 1996. The highest incidence is among the 25-29 year olds, at 14 per cent and then the rate falls off steeply to only 6 per cent for the middle-aged.

This tendency for common-law relationships to become less prevalent with age is partly an inter-generation difference in attitude towards marriage, but it also reflects the young's choice to test-run living together before marrying. For example, in 1991, among the 25 to 29 year olds, 11 per cent had never married and were living common-law. Five years later, only 8 per cent of the cohort remained in that situation.

From the chart, it may appear as though living common-law for the young is going out of fashion. However, the reverse is probably true. There has been a drop in "living-together relationships" overall, as a result of the difficult time youth are having finding well-paid secure jobs, which would enable them to set up their own households. Among the young who do live together, the proportion who opt for legal marriage status continued to drop dramatically, from 44 per cent in 1991 to 38 per cent in 1996.

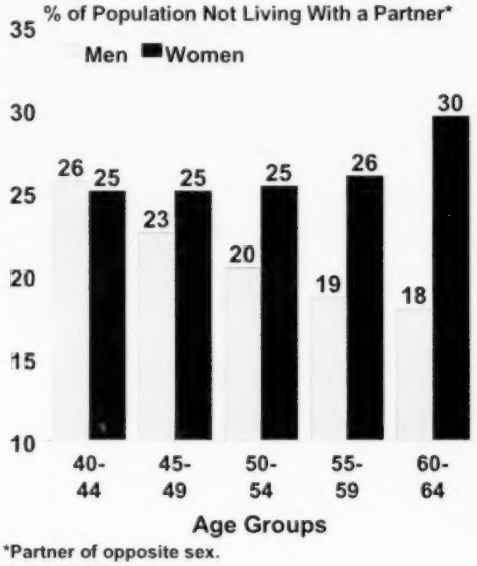
Among the Divorced & Separated, Common-Law Relationships Are Less Common



BC STATS

One interesting development over the last five years, is the considerable decline in common-law relationships among the divorced and separated. This is so for both men and women. Why this has occurred could be due to women's increasing economic independence. If the conventional wisdom is true, namely that men will usually only leave a marriage if they have another relationship to go to whereas women will leave if they are able to support themselves even if it means living on their own, then the increase in the number of divorced and separated persons not living with a partner could reflect an increase in the number of separations/divorces being initiated by women.

One in Three Women Enters Her Senior Years Without a Partner



*Partner of opposite sex.

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The chart above shows the extent to which women more than men are on their own by the time they reach middle-age. The main reasons for this are---among men and women between the age of 40 and 64, there are 15,000 more separated/divorced women than there are men (men have a higher probability of remarrying than women) and on top of that, a considerably higher proportion of the divorced/separated men live common-law (28%) compared to the women (20%). This large divergence in living arrangements among the same-age men and women confirms the common perception that divorced and separated middle-age men marry or live with women younger than themselves.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Commonlaw Partnerships By Legal Marital Status
MALE BY 5 YEAR AGE GROUPS

1996

	Male Population 15+				Never Married		Separated		Widowed		Divorced	
	Total	% Living As Single	% Living With Legal Spouse	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law
All Ages	1462770	39.7	53.2	7.0	501685	12.4	46035	17.6	33365	7.1	103025	29.5
15-19	124645	99.0	0.3	0.7	124100	0.7	65	0.0	10	0.0	120	8.3
20-24	119950	84.8	6.8	8.4	110845	9.0	560	8.0	25	0.0	400	17.5
25-29	134905	57.0	29.4	13.6	89790	19.1	2730	13.6	95	10.5	2645	29.5
30-34	154255	38.7	50.0	11.3	63600	21.8	5425	16.6	215	23.3	7910	33.3
35-39	160830	30.0	60.5	9.5	42180	22.0	7225	18.4	370	21.6	13770	33.3
40-44	152175	25.6	66.3	8.1	26280	19.9	7495	20.1	600	23.3	16900	32.4
45-49	141665	22.5	70.2	7.3	16215	17.9	6830	20.0	945	18.5	18240	32.5
50-54	105285	20.4	73.1	6.5	8470	14.3	4770	20.2	1185	16.9	13850	32.0
55-59	84290	18.6	76.3	5.1	5365	10.5	3125	19.8	1570	15.6	9870	28.8
60-64	76865	17.9	78.3	3.8	4250	8.9	2485	17.9	2545	11.2	7410	24.6
65+	207905	23.8	74.2	2.0	10590	4.9	5335	10.3	25805	4.6	11910	15.4

1991

	Male Population 15+				Never Married		Separated		Widowed		Divorced	
	Total	% Living As Single	% Living With Legal Spouse	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law
All Ages	1286555	37.5	55.9	6.7	417900	12.0	40780	20.4	29845	7.2	79410	31.7
15-19	108175	98.8	0.5	0.8	107540	0.8	60	8.3	35	0.0	35	14.3
20-24	112795	81.6	8.9	9.5	101655	10.4	700	9.3	35	14.3	385	27.3
25-29	133450	51.2	35.9	12.9	79470	19.6	3140	18.3	55	36.4	2945	35.0
30-34	145575	33.2	56.4	10.4	49575	21.8	5645	20.8	180	22.2	8070	38.4
35-39	139520	25.4	66.0	8.6	28620	21.0	6635	23.6	320	26.6	11905	36.9
40-44	132425	21.6	70.8	7.6	17035	18.1	6685	24.3	550	28.2	14460	36.4
45-49	101765	19.3	74.1	6.6	8980	14.2	4910	22.9	705	19.1	11765	35.4
50-54	81935	17.8	76.8	5.3	5615	10.4	3475	22.2	970	19.6	8910	31.6
55-59	75685	17.0	78.9	4.1	4635	9.5	2785	19.7	1605	14.0	6980	27.1
60-64	72875	18.1	78.8	3.1	4705	6.6	2225	16.0	2730	11.5	5770	21.6
65+	182355	23.2	75.1	1.7	10070	4.5	4525	10.7	22640	4.4	8195	14.6

Source: ***Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Canada***

Prepared By: ***BC STATS***

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Commonlaw Partnerships By Legal Marital Status
FEMALE BY 5 YEAR AGE GROUPS

1996

	Female Population 15+				Never Married		Separated		Widowed		Divorced	
	Total	% Living As Single	% Living With Legal Spouse	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law
All Ages	1526580	42.2	51.0	6.7	410650	14.8	56400	12.9	147635	2.9	133070	23.1
15-19	118290	96.6	0.9	2.5	117010	2.5	120	4.2	20	0.0	110	9.1
20-24	120895	72.0	15.1	12.9	100040	15.2	1635	11.6	100	5.0	900	28.3
25-29	136345	43.6	42.4	14.0	67870	24.5	5305	14.1	310	17.7	5060	32.8
30-34	157770	30.7	58.6	10.7	43965	25.9	8585	15.7	700	24.3	12080	33.4
35-39	165765	26.5	64.6	8.8	29145	24.9	9955	15.5	1415	16.6	18110	31.0
40-44	156025	25.0	67.3	7.7	18230	21.9	9050	15.4	2210	17.9	21500	29.1
45-49	140550	25.0	68.4	6.6	11265	16.6	7180	13.9	3540	14.7	22425	26.0
50-54	103105	25.3	69.6	5.2	5715	12.9	4640	11.6	4705	11.3	16330	21.5
55-59	84125	25.9	70.6	3.5	3475	8.8	2905	9.8	6900	7.8	11460	16.1
60-64	75765	29.5	68.3	2.2	2650	5.5	2195	5.7	10685	4.4	8465	10.7
65+	267945	55.0	44.1	0.9	11285	2.2	4825	2.6	117060	1.1	16635	4.7

1991

	Female Population 15+				Never Married		Separated		Widowed		Divorced	
	Total	% Living As Single	% Living With Legal Spouse	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law	Total	% Living Common-Law
All Ages	1333250	40.1	53.5	6.4	332825	14.8	48130	15.2	135880	3.0	103320	24.2
15-19	103545	95.4	1.4	3.2	101805	3.2	135	11.1	50	0.0	65	30.8
20-24	111590	65.4	20.1	14.5	86080	18.0	1980	16.7	110	9.1	980	33.7
25-29	134485	36.9	50.1	13.0	55555	25.5	5695	19.3	315	23.8	5575	38.3
30-34	148560	26.4	63.8	9.8	33350	25.3	7985	19.7	745	24.2	11675	37.2
35-39	141490	23.0	68.9	8.1	18820	22.8	8215	19.3	1275	21.2	15650	33.6
40-44	130555	22.9	70.3	6.8	11350	17.4	7150	16.8	2135	18.5	18155	29.1
45-49	98185	22.9	71.6	5.5	5765	13.4	4935	14.2	2930	14.7	14275	24.3
50-54	79555	22.8	73.3	3.9	3525	8.8	3180	10.8	4170	11.4	10395	19.0
55-59	72295	24.4	73.1	2.5	2610	6.3	2455	8.4	6590	6.5	7810	13.2
60-64	73330	29.5	68.6	1.9	2760	5.1	2090	5.5	11445	4.3	6715	9.2
65+	239660	54.9	44.2	0.9	11205	1.9	4320	2.9	106110	1.2	12030	4.6

Source: *Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Canada*

Prepared By: *BC STATS*

Infoline

December 12, 1997

fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,933.3	2.0
Canada	30,286.6	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Sep	2,824	-2.4
Merchandise Exports (raw) Sep	2,110	-9.5
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Sep	2,761	8.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	Oct '97	on year ago
BC	139.5	0.6
Canada	138.2	1.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	Nov '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,028	0.5
Employed - BC	1,848	1.0
Unemployed - BC	181	-4.5
		Nov '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.9	9.4
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.0	10.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Dec 10/97	Dec 11/96
Prime Business Rate	5.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.90	5.20
- 5 year	6.70	6.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Dec 10/97	Dec 11/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4240	1.3620
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7022	0.7342
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '97	on year ago
BC	614.13	1.1
Canada	600.35	1.8

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Released this week by BC STATS

- Exports, August 1997
- Labour Force Statistics, November 1997
- Earnings & Employment Trends, September 1997

Next week

- Current Statistics, December 1997
- Consumer Price Index, November 1997
- Business Indicators, December 1997

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